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October 21, 1962

MEMORANDUM OF MEETING WITH THE PRESIDENT, ATTORNEY GENERAL, SECRETARY McNAMARA, GENERAL TAYLOR, AND MR. McCONE.

1. General Sweeney reviewed in considerable detail the plans for an air strike against the missile bases, the air fields, a few SAM sites in critical locations and finally the plans for invasion.
2. It was decided that at a minimum an air strike must include both the missile sites and the air fields and such SAM sites as are necessary, and General Taylor was instructed to plan accordingly.
3. There was complete agreement that military action must include an invasion and occupation of Cuba.
4. Secretary McNamara and General Taylor told the President that an air strike could not provide absolute assurance that all missiles were destroyed; they indicated a 90 per cent probability. They also stated that any warning would very possibly cause the movement of missiles to obscure unknown locations from which they could become operational. General Taylor therefore recommended, on the basis of military grounds, that the air strike be conducted immediately, suggesting tomorrow morning, and that it be without warning. Secretary McNamara confirmed the military appraisal expressed above but made no recommendation as to policy.
5. In response to direct questioning from the President, the Attorney General and McCone advised against surprise attack for the reasons discussed at previous meetings. The Attorney General failed to make an absolute recommendation with respect to future military actions, indicating this question could be decided as the situation developed from day to day, and that only preparatory

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steps should be taken now. McCone urged on the other hand that the President in a public statement indicate an intention to remove the missiles and other potential weapons by means and at a time of his own choosing if surveillance did not prove conclusively that the Soviets and the Cubans were removing them.

6. The meeting adjourned to be reconvened at 2:30, with additional principals in attendance.

John A. McCone  
Director

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